

One of the Old Settlers of Iowa

ISSN 0003-4827

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Recommended Citation

The Annals of Iowa, 11(3) (Jul. 1873): 549-551

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treacherous current, and went into it neck deep, with his best clothes on. He came out in a sorry looking plight, but merry withal, and both, after having recovered a safer footing on *terra firma* and their steeds, went on their way rejoicing.

ONE OF THE OLD SETTLERS OF IOWA.

MR. John Box, of Floris, Davis county, came to Fort Madison, Lee county, Iowa, on the 7th day of October, 1833, himself and wife being the first white settlers south of Skunk river. All their children living (four in number) were born in Iowa. The eldest, D. F. Box, was the second white child born in Lee county, Mr. Samuel Ayers, now deputy auditor of state, being the first. Mr. Box is seventy-three years old, and his wife, the faithful companion of his toils and triumphs, is now sixty. They lived in a log cabin on the western bank of the Mississippi some thirteen years, and during that time, without moving, lived in the territories of Michigan, of Wisconsin, of Iowa, and the state of Iowa. His nearest neighbors were seven miles off, but considered close then. Mrs. Box moved in the first society before she came to Iowa, and in after years, when her daughters were grown up, she rehearsed to them her early history, and said she was better off then when she had parlor, sitting-room, kitchen, and corn crib all in one room, than they were now when they had them all separate.

The first paper published in the state was the Fort Madison *Pioneer*, or *Courier*, issued first in the spring of 1835, and edited by a Mr. Edwards. Mr. Box was the first postmaster in Iowa, and paid for carrying the mail from (Flint Hills) Burlington and Montrose to Fort Madison, for twelve

months, at sixteen dollars per month, to a man by the name of Wm. Wyant, eighty-two years of age. The first court organized in Iowa was in the year 1835. Wm. Morgan was chief justice, Samuel Hughes first assistant, and John Forrest second. Mr. Box being postmaster, received the first orders for the opening of the court, which was to be done at Burlington on such a day and hour, and he was selected as one of the first grand jurors. He also received notice that Zeddek Ingram was appointed the first sheriff of Des Moines county. J. B. Teaze was the prosecuting attorney. Richard Cheny was the first criminal arraigned at the bar, for stealing a barrel of eggs, at Quincy, Illinois. The court was held in a log house. Ingram (sheriff) appeared in due time with the prisoner, who was incarcerated in an old log house, with logs and rails, and in due time was arraigned, and in the prosecution of the case the question of jurisdiction came up, the foreman of the jury Mr. Box, holding the case to be out of the jurisdiction of the court, which the judges finally agreed was a correct rendering of Blackstone, and the prisoner was released.

The next case on the docket was the arrest of a man by the name of Danwiddie, for murder. He was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged, for killing a man by the name of Compton. But a hundred men plead for his life, and he was set at liberty. All this was the work of the first day's sitting of the court, and shows the dispatch with which such things were disposed of in the early days.

Mr. Box saw ex-Governor Grimes and Mr. Starr when they first came to Iowa, in December, 1838. The first legislature for the Wisconsin territory (now Iowa) convened at Belmont, in the winter of 1836, under Henry Dodge as Governor, (the father of A. C. Dodge, of Burlington), and Mr. Box was a member of that honorable body. In June, 1837, the first legislature met at Burlington, for Iowa territory, and petitioned congress to be set off as such.

Mr. Box has figured conspicuously in the early settlement of the state, and has a large stock of rich reminiscences of

his early pioneer life. He says he was well acquainted with John C. Breckenridge when he was campaigning at Burlington for Van Buren, as against Harrison.

He was conversant with all the facts related in a book entitled, "Banditti of the Prairie," their murder of Col. Dav-
enport, and others. He says he helped move the first white
settler into Fort Des Moines, then a frontier post. His
name was Joseph Morrison.

PILGRIMS AND OLD SETTLERS.

The following poem, composed by Mr. Geo. W. Grant,
was read at the Old Settlers' Reunion, at Nevin, Adair
county, June 19th, 1873:—

Adair

FROM native shore by tempest driven,
The Pilgrim fathers fled,
To seek a home where they might dwell,
Nor earthly monarch dread.

They chose the Lord to be their king,
Their captain and their guide;
And trusting in his arm alone,
They launched upon the tide.

We've stood upon the rock-bound shore,
And viewed the mighty flood,
That bore those Christian heroes o'er —
Those servants of the Lord.

Stood where on desert sands they knelt,
By waters cold and rude,
Alone upon the dreary strand
Of ocean's solitude.

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